

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, and 5-20 are pending in the present application. By this reply, claim 4 has been cancelled.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 11 and 19 are allowed over the prior art of record. Claim 10 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 14 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikemure, Abe, and Shimomura in view of Werth et al. Claims 2-3, 5 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikemura, Abe, Shimomura and Werth et al. as applied to the above claims, and further in view of Syeda-Mahmood. Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikemure, Abe, Shimomura, and Werth et al. as applied to claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 14 and 16 above, and further in view of Takahashi. Claim 15 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikemure, Abe, Shimomura, and Werth et al. as applied to claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 14 and 16 above and further in view of Casey et al. Claims 7, 9, 13, 18 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikemure, Abe, and Shimomura in view of Tanaka et al. These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

Without acquiescing to any of the Examiner's allegations made in the previous Office Actions, to expedite prosecution only, independent claims 1 and 13 have been amended to incorporate therein the subject matter of claim 4. Claim 7 contains similar subject matter as claim 4 in a varying scope.

Independent claim 1 now requires, *inter alia* “the evaluating step includes defining groups of said lines, two or more adjacent lines being allocated to a common group if a separation between adjacent ones of said two or more lines is less than a reference value; and wherein the deciding step includes the step of evaluating at least one parameter of the groups of lines defined for the different crops”. Other independent claims 7 and 13 recite similar features in a varying scope. Regarding these features, the Examiner alleges that “Abe describes that separate lines are linked to form one line, if the separation between adjacent lines is less than a predetermined amount δd and the line length is above a threshold L_{th} ”, on page 6 of the last Office Action. However, such lines are not adjacent lines in Abe. Abe (at column 3, lines 11) discloses adjacent lines are merged into one line if δV is smaller than a predefined threshold. That is, in Abe, adjacent lines are merged into one line. In clear contrast, in Applicants’ invention, two or more adjacent lines are allocated to a common group if a separation between adjacent ones of said two or more lines is less than a reference value. There is no merging of adjacent lines into one line in Applicants’ invention as required by each of independent claims 1, 7 and 13.

The Examiner also states that “Shimomura describes that a line density calculation is used for extracting a segmented region from a document image (column 2, lines 26-31)” and using “the line density calculation as taught by Shimomura, in order to improve apparatus ability to divide the document image into a plurality of regions (Shimomura, column 1, lines 60-63).” However, all Shimomura discloses is calculating a line density and the specifics of this calculation are not disclosed or are disclosed generally. For instance, column 6, lines 47-51, Shimomura discloses that “...a line density and field-pixel density are first calculated from a run length corresponding to the number of continuously filled pixels”. Such line density calculation is clearly and patentably distinct from the deciding step as recited in each of the independent claims.

Furthermore, none of the other secondary references cited by the Examiner correct these deficiencies in the combination of Ikemure, Abe and Shimomura since the Examiner relies on the secondary references to allegedly teach other dependent claims.

Moreover, the feature of deciding if a crop contains a table using these groups as recited in each of the independent claims in a varying scope is neither taught nor suggested by any of the applied references, either taken singularly or in combination thereof.

Accordingly, independent claims 1, 7 and 13 and their dependent claims (due to their dependency) are patentable over the applied references, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and to provide an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

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Amendment dated August 4, 2006
Reply to Office Action of April 4, 2006

Docket No.: 0142-0380P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By Esther Chong
Esther H. Chong
Registration No.: 40,953
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant